

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 16, 2010

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, &  
Transportation  
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James L. Oberstar  
Chairman  
House Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, &  
Transportation  
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John L. Mica  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rockefeller, Hutchison, Oberstar, and Mica:

As you begin deliberations on the final version of the FAA Reauthorization bill, we respectfully request your support for the inclusion of the Menendez Amendment promoting disclosure and transparency in airline fees. By unanimous consent, the Senate included in its version of the bill these provisions requiring airlines to clearly display all fees and surcharges associated with a given ticket, and we urge you to preserve them in the final version of the legislation.

The practice of “unbundling” fees for airline travel is making it exceedingly difficult for consumers to know in advance what they will pay for air travel or how to compare ticket prices. One airline’s recent announcement of its intention to charge \$45 each way per carry-on bag is just the latest example of airlines imposing fees of differing amounts for different services. Consumers often discover these extra fees—which can add up to a significant proportion of the total cost of air travel—late in the purchase process or even at the airport or on the plane after they’ve purchased their ticket. Comparing ticket prices based on airfare alone thus gives consumers a misleading impression of what they may ultimately pay for air travel, leaving budget-minded consumers susceptible to purchasing the more expensive of two airline tickets.

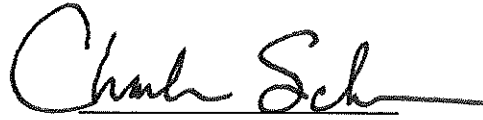
One way to rectify this problem is to introduce more transparency in airline ticket pricing. We were proud to support the Menendez Amendment in the Senate bill to require airline websites and third-party travel websites to clearly display all fees and surcharges associated with a given ticket, before a consumer is required to provide personal information such as a name, address, and credit card information. Providing consumers with fee information early in the purchase process will facilitate apples-to-apples price comparisons between airline tickets.

At a time when family budgets are tight, we believe it is critical to ensure that consumers have the necessary information to make the best possible purchasing decisions. We hope you agree and will support these provisions in the final version of the legislation. In addition, we have communicated to the Senate Commerce Committee helpful technical changes to the Menendez Amendment that we have received from the Department of Transportation and travel agent industry groups, which we hope you will include. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



ROBERT MENENDEZ  
United States Senator



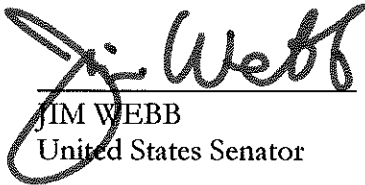
CHARLES SCHUMER  
United States Senator



RON WYDEN  
United States Senator



MARY LANDRIEU  
United States Senator



JIM WEBB  
United States Senator